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ABSTRACT

Instructional leadership studies are plentiful but have many shortcomings, including lack of definition of key variables, problems of causality, overrepresentation of exemplary schools, and lack of validity and reliability in research design and implementation. Definitions of "leadership" and "instruction" are needed. There is a trend toward defining "leadership" in terms of critical behaviors. "Instruction" is defined as a four-step process: (1) formulation of objectives; (2) selection of teaching strategies; (3) reinforcement of learning; and (4) evaluation of student progress. An examination of over 400 research reports indicates that the most powerful predictor of instructional effectiveness is leadership style. Principals should be aware of their personal leadership style and value system. Principals also need to be aware of curriculum trends; a brief summary of trends is provided in this paper. Many states working toward educational reform are establishing principal academies, workshops, and other programs to develop principals as instructional strategists and managers. Included are a list of selected Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) documents on the subject, and a general reference list.(MD)

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THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

ANNUAL CONVENTION

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SESSION TITLE; WHAT RESEARCH TELLS THE PRINCIPAL ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

DATE; JANUARY 26, 1985

TWO SESSIONS; 1:15-2:30 p.m. and 2:45-4:00 p.m.

SPEAKER; Dr. Claire C. Irwin, Professor
Educational Evaluation and Research
College of Education, Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan 48202

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NASSP 69th ANNUAL CONVENTION - NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Session Title: What Research Tells the Principal About Instructional Leadership

Speaker: Dr. Claire C. Irwin, Professor, Educational Evaluation and Research, College of Education, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202

Date: Saturday, January 26, 1985

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ABSTRACT (Journalistic Summary)

Educational research studies focused upon the principal as an instructional leader are plentiful but laced with deficiencies which signal caution in accepting results verbatim.

Some of the short-comings are: (1) lack of definition of key variables; (2) problems in asserting causality; (3) over-representation of exemplary schools in the sampling process; (4) lack of validity (generalizability) and reliability (replicability) in research designs and in instrumentation.

Operational definitions of "leadership" and "instruction" are needed. There is a trend toward definition of "leadership" in terms of critical behaviors (functions as director, coordinator, collaborator, "gatekeeper of change"). "Instruction" can be defined as a four-step process: (1) formulation of objectives; (2) selection of teaching strategies; (3) re-enforcement of learning; (4) evaluation of student progress.

An examination of over four hundred (400) research reports indicates that the most powerful predictor of instructional effectiveness is leadership style. One of the newer taxonomies of leadership stance consists of the following terms: "management engineer", "human engineer", "clinical practitioner", "chief" and "high priest" (via Thomas Sergiovanni and Lillian Radford)--each classification potentially successful in the right context.

The principal is expected to have an "Olympian" awareness of curriculum trends which are succinctly summarized in the Instructional Leadership Handbook, James Keefe and John Jenkins, editors, an NASSP publication.

The Task Force of the Education Commission for the States (ECS) and other national bodies have recommended establishing principals' academies, institutes, and workshops to upgrade the principal as instructional strategist and manager.

The full text of these remarks is available to convention participants. Included in the text is a listing of "unpublished documents", and journal articles gathered from a computerized search of the literature through the ERIC Network.

NASSP ANNUAL CONVENTION -- New Orleans, Louisiana

WHAT RESEARCH TELLS THE PRINCIPAL ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

by

Dr. Claire C. Irwin, Professor

Educational Evaluation and Research,
College of Education, Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan

January 26, 1985

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> A number of the reform reports published in the last couple of years have pointed out the primacy of the principal's role in instructional leadership.
>
> -- Chris Pipho, Phi Delta Kappan
> November, 1984

An Educational Research Perspective

In his book entitled How Research Has Changed American Schools, Robert M.W. Travers observes that an aura of enthusiasm surrounded educational research efforts during the first quarter of this Century. Unfortunately the glow of anticipation soon waned into disappointment. Practitioners, faced with the rapidly changing educational scene sought easy answers or a "quick fix" from researchers for a variety of everyday school problems. Educational research could not live up to its promise. Research results appeared to be esoteric, certainly impractical. Moreover, research conclusions in narrow domains were "vague and contradictory". Isolated research studies when examined together produced inconsistent results. Confusion was fanned by the unwillingness of on-line educators to accept results based upon probabilistic findings.

In the last two decades, certain factors have prevented educational research findings from being translated into practice. One set of factors is related to the position of many top-flight researchers. Fred Kerlinger, in his presidential address to the American Educational Research Association (AERA), took the stance that there is little connection between research investigation and actual practice:

Most people assume that educational research can solve educational problems and improve educational practice. The assumption is false. And it creates expectations which cannot be fulfilled. Educational research does not lead directly to improvement in educational practice. The solution of a research problem is on a different level of discourse from the solution of an action problem.

Additional factors and circumstances have prevented research from being translated into practice. Some of these factors are: (1) philosophies and attitudes that softened the educational scene; (2) the values revolution of the 1960's which basically changed America's life style; (3) disintegration of the traditional family unit; (4) laxity of discipline within school walls; (5) drug use and abuse; (6) criminal penetration into schools and grave concerns regarding safety and security; (7) limited school budgets. Faced with sweeping philosophical, social, economic, and cultural changes, school administrators were hard pressed to cope with a multiplicity of local problems reflecting national trends and found little time for study of research findings for cues to better school practice.

With the work of the National Committee on Excellence in Education which produced A Nation at Risk and the appearance of other national reports, there appears to be hope that interest and faith in educational research will be re-ignited and viewed as a means of producing a cache of findings which may ultimately lead to school improvement.

Another positive note must be cited in regard to the work of Professor Gene Glass, University of Colorado, who has pioneered a technique for integrating disparate research findings into congruent patterns. This technique, called "meta analysis", is an analysis of analyses, i.e., the statistical analysis of many individual analyses in a given domain, not by "pooling the words in conclusion", but by pooling, in a systematic fashion, original data to determine discrepancies and communalities in research findings.

To return to Fred Kerlinger's position, one might point out that he is actually referring to basic research as in the hard sciences. School people are always more interested in the other side of the coin, namely, "applied research", that which has an immediate impact on practice. Precepts and concepts generated by research activity may, of course, be operationally useful, but also must be handled with care and caution. Presently, one set of research results may differ from another set. This is not a hopeless situation, since educational research may still provide some useful immediate suggestions and recommendations, but these must not be construed as a cook-book of pre-tested recipes.

Problems Concerning School Effectiveness Research

Instructional Leadership studies are generally classified under the major heading of School Effectiveness Research. These studies are plentiful, but appear to have certain deficiencies which signal caution in accepting, verbatim, the results. Some of these short-comings are:

1. Vagueness and Lack of Definition: Key variables, e.g., "leadership", "instruction", "student achievement", have not been clearly and/or operationally defined.

2. Characteristics of Principals as Leaders: The personal and/or professional characteristics of effective principals have not been convincingly related to student achievement, and when related, correlations seem to be low.

3. Problems of Causality: Very often only principals, identified as successful, and schools, identified as exemplary, have been the targets of investigation. leading to spurious or inflated relationships, and under these conditions, assertions of cause and effect relationships become tautology.

4. Sampling: Exemplary schools are over-represented.

5. Demographic Variables: Little attempt has been made to control for demographic variables, in some current studies. In earlier (1970's) investigations much emphasis was placed upon the demographics of principals (sex, age, socio-economic background experience, training) without relating these to school context. Either approach foreshadows distorted results.

6. School Profiles: Restricted profiles or dimensions of a school's achievement standing have been generated by using only a few "effectiveness" measures (e.g., standardized test scores).

7. Standards: The use of absolute and arbitrary standards to assess effectiveness has not taken into consideration equivalencies for culturally disadvantaged or low socio-economic student learning. Extreme contrasts, and inappropriate comparisons have resulted.

8. Validity: There appears to be narrow focus, and the use of small samples, resulting in a lack of generalizability.

9. Reliability: There appears to be lack of stability

or consistency in effectiveness measures, and a poor chance for replicability.

10. Accumulated Research: In general, the bulk of instructional leadership research appears to have been done at the elementary, rather than at secondary school levels.

In spite of these inadequacies, studies seem to show that the principal in a leadership role has a greater impact on student learning than the amount and extent of facilities, services, and other support systems. What is known is a foundation for future inquiry.

Operational Definition of "Leadership"

According to Wilbur Brookover, the "failure to identify the components of effective leadership" has hampered current research findings. The literature is heavy with various schemes for identifying leadership styles, but these must be viewed as postulates deriving from various theories of leadership. One can easily locate redundancies in the search for definition. For example, one investigator has defined leadership as "how a leader leads".

A trend which appears to be useful is definition by identifying research based critical behaviors. For example, the principal as instructional leader:

---has a keen sense of responsibility and assumes the roles of director, coordinator, in maintaining and improving the quality of a building's instructional program

---has a clear vision of the mission of the school

---is action or task-oriented

---defines and sets in collaboration with assistant principals, department heads, curriculum specialists, and teachers, clear and precise long-range and short-range goal for student learning and achievement

---is the "gatekeeper of change", a supporter of innovative strategies

---places emphasis upon effective teaching a learning

---is energetic, charismatic, maintains a high profile

---monitors the pre and post evaluations of student achievement

---initiates and promotes regular in-service training for teachers

---metes out or delegates routine administrative tasks

---provides a clean, healthy, stimulating learning environment

---is aware of trends in instructional strategies

---observes regularly and personally the work of students and teachers in the classroom

---has an "Olympian" perspective

This list of crucial behaviors of the instructional leader is no sense complete, but is derived from the research literature and demonstrates a possible way to anchor fuzzy concepts in specific behavioral terms.

Operational Definition of "Instruction"

While the attempts to define "instruction" are numerous, the following dimensions of the process appear to be invariant: formulation of learning objectives, selection of methods of teaching, re-enforcement activities, and evaluation.

1. Formulation of Objectives: Goal setting with regard to curriculum content over a broad segment of time (year, semester, term), as well as over a narrow time frame (monthly, weekly, daily) is the sine qua non of the instructional process.

2. Selection of Methods of Teaching: A wide variety of instructional strategies are available. Choices of methods should be characterized by a change of pace and acquaintance with a wide range of models for teaching.

3. Re-enforcement of Learning: Instruction should include the application, synthesis, and integration of learning by students. Knowledges, skills, beliefs, and attitudes, should be applied to new and challenging problem solving situations.

4. Evaluation: The evaluation phase of the process must include appraisals of the breadth, depth and level of student accomplishment in the light of previously stated general and specific objectives. Assessments are often best accomplished by teacher-made tests and other classroom devices. Student performance on state, regional, or national tests ought to be interpreted in terms of curricular validity or, conversely, the curriculum ought to reflect what is expected on reputable standardized instruments.

Various Models for Facilitating Linkage between Leadership and Instruction

A Needs Assessment Model and Goal Setting

An instructional leader has the responsibility for specifying and communicating the mission of the school's instructional program. Clear statements of program or course objectives are not easy to come by without the collegial involvement of the entire professional staff. How can this realistically be done? Perhaps one answer is through an administrative team approach to pre-evaluation activity or needs assessment.

There are many patterns for planning and executing a local needs assessment. One of the most practical plans is presented in a paperback entitled Evaluation Without Fear by Roger Kaufman and Susan Thomas. The authors define a "need" as a gap between "where one is and where one ought be be." Gaps, when identified by curriculum area, can be ranked according to importance. The priorities of gaps or needs can then be translated into classroom performance or learning objectives. A review of course objectives ought to be done annually. A needs assessment may yield new goals or objectives and may also confirm existing ones. An identification of gaps between what is and what should be can serve as beacon lights to determine change and maintenance requirements. Ways and means for the student attainment of specified goals may be projected along with appropriate processes and interventions.

The flow charts presented by Kaufman and Thomas are useful guides. The terminology appears to be derived from the already familiar language of the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluational model developed by Egon Guba and The Ohio State University group in the mid-sixties in response to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965.

Models for Teaching (Methods)

Educational research has produced a wide range of studies on teaching methods. Methods per se do not appear to make a difference in teaching effectiveness. Other variables such as students' individual differences, along with differences in traits, maturation, and aspirations must be taken into consideration in assessing the effectiveness of methods of instruction. The supervision of instruction should be guided by two perspectives: (1) evidence of variety of teaching strategies, and (2) teacher knowledge of various models of instruction. The second edition of Models of Teaching by Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil presents a systematic discussion of some twenty seven models. The

various strategies are clustered in categories: the information processing family, the personal family, the social family, and behavioral models.

The principal as instructional leader may want to be cognizant of some of these different teaching approaches, thus to direct and inspire teachers to break away from stereotypes and old modes of classroom presentation.

The Joyce-Weil text offers a systematic taxonomy, an examination, and discussion of, and many different approaches to teaching which may be applied to curriculum areas at large.

Teaching Models Classified according to Joyce and Weil

(Information Processing Family)	Sources
Concept Attainment: Basics of Thinking	Jerome Bruner
Inductive Thinking: Collecting, Organizing, Manipulating data	Hilda Taba
Inquiry Training: from facts to theories	J. Richard Suchman
Advance Organizers; Improving the effectiveness of lectures	David Ausubel
Memory Model: getting the facts straight	Jerry Lucas
Cognitive Growth: increasing the capacity to think	Jean Piaget (Kohlberg,Siegel)
Biological Science Inquiry model	Joseph Schwab
(Personal Family)	
Non-directive Teaching: Counseling method as model	Carl Rogers
Synectics: a model to develop creativity	William J.J.Gordon
Awareness training	Wm. Schultz George Brown
Classroom meeting model	William Glasser
(The Social Family)	

Group investigation; democratic process as source	Herbert Thelen
Role playing: Social behavior and Values	Fannie and George Shaftel
Jurisprudential Inquiry; clarifying public issues	Donald Oliver
Laboratory Training: T-Group model	Encountergroup strategies

Social Simulation; interactive games

Social inquiry

(Behavioral models of Teaching)

Contingency Management: recognizing cause and effect

Self-Control through Operant methods

Training Model: design, demonstrate, practice, feedback

Stress reduction; reducing anxiety

Desensitization; replacing anxiety (such as test anxiety)

(Models of thinking about models)

Assertiveness training: expressing feelings

Mastery learning	Benjamin Bloom and et al
Matching environment to people	David Hunt
Conditions of learning	Robert Gagne
Teaching and Behavioral Objectives: boosting learning	Ralph Tyler

The Joyce-Weil book is an invaluable tool for teachers who wish to build a repertoire of teaching strategies and for principals who want to help faculty to grow in classroom presentation skills.

A Re-enforcement Model

This is perhaps the weakest link in the instructional chain. An emphasis upon project development in various curriculum areas should be stressed. Projects should be

meaningful, practical, and reflect work as it exists in the real world. Content objectives should be translated into project tasks which reflect knowledges, skills, attitudes congruent with the aims of a democratic society. Drill, workbooks, or end of chapter exercises will not do.

An Evaluation Model

Evaluation of student achievement within the classroom should be, first and foremost, formative in nature, which is to say that assessment should be on-going, global, concurrent with expectations expressed in curriculum objectives. Summative evaluation of the end-product should consist of a wide range of assessments and not be a one-shot affair. Important hallmarks of good evaluational procedures are these:

--use of direct and indirect methods of assessment; of objective as well as subjective criteria, of formal and informal methods of assessment

--use of scientific methodology including the development or selection of appropriate instrumentation which can stand the tests of reliability and validity

--recognition of the principle of individual differences

--utilization of the newest skills, and techniques for appraisal (perhaps borrowed from disciplines other than professional education.)

--is a two-way street with the evaluatees participating in the process and also having the opportunity to evaluate the evaluator (teacher)

An effective instructional leader as a supervisor will operate with a grasp of the nature of instruction on the larger canvas.

More Specific Research Findings re: Instructional Leadership

From an examination of over four hundred research reports monographs, and summary articles, certain recurrent characteristics of effective instructional leaders emerged (some of these were used in the operational definition, earlier).

The most powerful predictor of instructional effectiveness appears to be leadership style. In the light of this finding, it is imperative that an instructional leader be aware of his/her own leadership modality and value system, and be capable of self-analysis and assessment.

Style has been thoroughly studied and examined in the light of a wide range of leadership theories. If the principal is to recognize, it is recommended that one of the various schema be consulted for clues and cues. There are many. One could refer to an earlier classification system, namely, the nomothetic (normative, law-making) versus the idiographic (personal, people-oriented) dimensions of leadership. Or to the trait approach (personal vs. power-influence). or to situational models such as Fiedler's (1978) Contingency Model, the Hersey and Blanchard (1977) Charismatic Leadership analysis, or to Yukl's Multiple Linkage Theory or to the Vroom-Yetton model.

Later attempts to identify style include schema reported in the Leadership Up Close edition of Educational Leadership where leaders are classified as: "management engineer", "human engineer", "clinical practitioner", "chief", and "high priest". And then there is Mintzberg's leader roles deriving from the decision sciences: "interpersonal" stance (figurehead, liaison person); "informational" stance (monitor, disseminator, spokesperson); decisional stance (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator).

What is actually needed is more research to determine how different leadership styles and persons interact with the school situation or context to produce desirable or undesirable results. What is needed is solid evidence to determine what mix and match is best.

In addition to the effects of style on effectiveness in the leadership function, the following recurring motifs were located. Effective instructional leaders:

--reduce stressful situations

--translate the mission of the school into specific school and classroom objectives; maintain global perspectives

--have faith in the potentialities of all students:

communicate this belief

--promote cross-cultural contacts

--believe in teamwork to expedite diagnosis, allocation, implementation and evaluational tasks; are committed to collaboration to improve instruction and learning

--promote informal "teacher talk" about instruction

--are personally involved in the on-going instructional process; communicate a belief in participatory goal setting; make time for presence in classrooms (announced or unannounced); are frequent visitors, participants in the work of the classroom

--advise teachers to minimize the non-instructional use of class time

--use discretion, feedback, humanistic approaches with teachers and students

--reward good work

--make pre-and-post observation conferences pleasureable experiences for teachers

--communicate the essential purpose of teacher evaluation, namely, instructional improvement

--have regular (perhaps monthly) meetings with students to conduct problem-solving experiences regarding school problems, current incidents, media events relating learning to daily happenings in the the world; apply other student motivational strategies

--use performance data to see that students are fairly evaluated

--suggest modern evaluational strategies for program assessment

--check assessment procedures and devices for curriculum congruence

--check up on time spent on task

--develop school or local norms for standardized test results

--monitor students through standardized test-taking

--have some training in the decision sciences

--are committed to strong in-service training programs for teachers; give teachers choices, but insure regular attendance at seminars relevant to instruction

--are change facilitators, responders, initiators

--produce written policies (teachers and students need the backbone of policy)

The instructional leader also has the awesome task of remaining human even when at the mercy of the presses and pulls of the multifaricus dimensions of the administrative yoke.

--has a personal vision--perhaps best explained in a commentary on Franklin Delano Roosevelt, April 14, 1945

> The genius of a good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with successfully

--keeps a balance between concern for goals and concern for people

--is an efficient time manager, delegates "administrivia"

--has a tolerance for stress

--has a tolerance for ambiguity--one remembers the observations of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

--is an innovator, not just a peace keeper

--is forceful, dynamic, open to new ideas, persuasive; listens to others; involves teachers, provides expert opinion, consultants or curriculum specialists to review content trends

--provides a continual program of staff development with special emphasis upon new teaching strategies; participates personally in seminars, conferences which teachers are expected to attend

The principal as instructional
Observer/Evaluator in the Classroom

Research has demonstrated that thinking or problem-solving skills are not automatically taught in such subjects as science, mathematics, history, or the humanities. They must be developed. A general plan, stressing thinking skills derived from scientific method, that is applicable to most subject matter areas having the following components:

Identification of problem

Formulating problem

Exploring strategies to solve problems

Acting upon selected strategies

Looking at the consequences of using various strategies

In examining the techniques of direct instruction, Barak Rosenshine, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, has developed a list of six crucial teaching functions which might be used as the basis of a check list for assessing classroom instruction:

Does the teacher?

1. Review and check previous work before beginning a new lesson
2. Present new material in a orderly fashion
3. Guide the application, practice regarding the new topic
4. Provide feedback and corrections
5. Monitor independent seatwork (which is held at a minimum)
6. Provide weekly, monthly review of topics covered

Research further indicates that the effective principal encourages teachers to have positive expectations for all students, and arranges for teachers to observe their students in other classes. sensitize teachers regarding expectations; should arrange for teachers to observe their students in other classes.

High expectations can be underbuilt by preparing monthly bulletins dealing with school expectations or hold discussions in a group setting on academic expectations for

the students and for the school. In this both students and teachers are sensitized to the aim for high hopes.

Curriculum Trends

The secondary school administrator has a formidable task of being aware of the trends in a full range of curriculum offerings. These futures are well discussed in the NASSP publication entitled Instructional Leadership Handbook by James W. Keefe and John M. Jenkins, editors. Some of these trends related to curriculum areas are:

English/Language arts: the shift to holistic thinking; learning by doing in communication situations, not drill in an hermetically sealed atmosphere.

Reading: development of enrichment stress, critical reading, vocabulary building, rate and efficiency training; specialized reading in particular subjects. ("reading" no longer implies remediation, only)

The Arts. study of the unique goal of each of the arts as these reflect a variety of cultures; historical, re-creative, and judicial aspects of art (Theodore Greene), social and intellectual influences

Foreign Language; communication proficiency in a foreign language; intensive settings, laboratories, journals and magazines in respective languages

Mathematics: emphasis upon problem-solving and computer related skills; organizing and interpreting data

Physical Education: the importances of fitness for leisure time activity; competitive and cooperative skills

Science: distinguishing between scientific evidence and opinion; observation, experimentation; organizing materials and communicating results; drawing conclusions; establishing relationships

Social Studies: emphasis upon citizenship and critical thinking, political partnerships; American studies in terms of themes not chronology

Vocational/Technical Education: collaboration with business and industry; use of private sector for personnel and curriculum development, competency-based vocational curriculum; emphasis upon cognitive and affective high transfer skills along with psycho-motor skills; articulation of the high school and middle school curriculum with community college programs

These trends only briefly mentioned here might be the focus of rigorous in-service training seminars, workshops, or conferences.

School Principals and the Reform Movement

Reform movements toward excellence in education across the the Nation have gained attention and credibility. What are the implications for building administrators? The primacy of the principal's role has been established. The Carnegie Commission's report suggested that principals be given a core of training similar to that recommended for teachers. The task force of the Education Commission for the States (ECS) and other reporting agencies have taken the position that the principal be viewed as the "head teacher". (John Goodlad, cognizant of the heavy demands on a principal's time, disagrees.)

However, many States are committed to the improvement of school instructional leadership and management. in practice this means establishing principals' academies and institutes, workshops, and other state-sponsored programs geared toward the upgrading of the principal as an instructional strategist and manager. As in South Carolina (Education Reform Act of 1984), the State Assessment Center will assess principals on the basis of instructional leadership; the act further specifies that a principal must participate every two years in seminars focused upon improving instructional leadership and will be evaluated annually on the basis of state-wide criteria.

Other States, Texas, Tennessee, Florida have initiated procedures which place emphasis upon the principal's instructional leadership prowess. As the reform movement moves into the mid-eighties, it seems to be clear that much more attention will be given to the principal's effectiveness in the leadership role.

In conclusion then words from the past may serve as inspiration for the future.

It is time for a new generation of leadership, to cope with new problems and new opportunities. For there is a new world to be won -- John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Television Address, July 4, 1960.

Selected ERIC Documents

The following list of research documents was prepared from a computerized search of the literature through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). ERIC is the leading information retrieval service which scans two indexes, Resources in Education (RIE) and the Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE). Abstracts of these materials are available through the ERIC network.

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